

Introduced by Senator Kuehl

February 9, 2004

An act relating to dependent children.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1178, as introduced, Kuehl. Dependent children: parenting.

Existing law authorizes the juvenile court to adjudge a child a dependent child of the court if the child has suffered, or there is a substantial risk that the child will suffer, among other things, serious physical harm inflicted nonaccidentally upon the child by his or her parent or guardian, or serious physical harm or illness as a result of the failure or inability of the parent or guardian to adequately supervise or protect that child.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to preserve the continuity of the family unit and ensure the maintenance and strengthening of family relationships between a dependent minor parent and his or her child, as specified. The bill would also make related findings and declarations.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares the
2 following:

3 (a) It is in the interest of children whenever possible to be raised
4 in safe and secure birth families.

1 (b) Anecdotal evidence shows that dependent minors who are
2 parents lose their parental rights faster and at higher rates than teen
3 parents who are not in the dependency system.

4 (c) The dependency system frequently fails to provide
5 dependent parenting minors with adequate resources and
6 opportunities to successfully parent their children.

7 (d) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this act to
8 preserve the continuity of the family unit and ensure the
9 maintenance and strengthening of family relationships between a
10 dependent minor parent and his or her child by ensuring that the
11 courts and responsible agencies shall, whenever possible, protect
12 the best interests of a dependent minor parent and his or her child
13 as a unit, and shall make diligent and active efforts to maintain
14 minor parent-child relationships.

